



Illustration by Jeanne R. Janish,
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PLAGIOBOTHRYS LEPTOCLADUS **SLENDER BRANCHED POPCORN-FLOWER**

Slender-branched Popcorn-flower is an annual that branches at the base into several prostrate stems that are 5-15 cm long. The strap-shaped leaves are up to 5 cm long and are opposite at the base but alternate above. Foliage is glabrous to sparsely covered with stiff hairs. The sessile flowers are borne at the branch tips in crowded, narrow, 1-sided, curved spikes that unwind as they mature. The white flowers have 5 narrowly lance-shaped, densely hairy sepals that elongate and bend to the same side in fruit. The minute, tubular corolla is as long as the sepals and flares into 5 spreading lobes. There are 4 lance-shaped, bristly nutlets that are 1-3 mm long, each with a prominent ridge on the inner face. Flowering and fruiting in July-August.

The enlarged sepals, all bent to one side in fruit separate this species from the more widespread *PLAGIOBOTHRYS SCOULERI*. Species of *CRYPTANTHA* are similar, but none of our species are prostrate or occur in wet habitats. A hand lens is needed for positive identification.